

National Guard To The Rescue

Road Warriors to repair 250 West, end bureaucratic feud

DEREK JENSEN
MANAGING EDITOR

Whoever said the pen was mightier than the sword?

What politicians squabbled over for months took the military a matter of seconds to solve when the Utah National Guard last week resolved to repair Midway's 250 West to ensure adequate passageway to Soldier Hollow during next year's Olympic Games. It marked the end of a bureaucratic feud between Wasatch County, the Salt Lake Organizing Committee and Utah Division of Transportation who all claimed they were unable to fund the project.

"We wouldn't have got

it done this year if they didn't step in and help," said Midway City Councilmen Mike Bronson of the Guard.

Now, beginning in early June, the Guard will haul in gravel, build the road base

and grade a five block stretch of 250 West that snakes up to the cross-country and biathlon venue. The back route is expected to be an alternate for athletes, dignitaries and media, according to

Bronson. Center Street will be used to bus in the mass of spectators.

For insurance liability reasons, Midway threatened to close the road during the Olympics unless it was rebuilt and re-paved, saying it was unfit for heavy traffic. Midway City Councilman Karl North sent a letter to State Olympic Officer Lane Beattie and the Governor's office outlining the city's intentions.

"They were really worried that we were going to allow local traffic only on

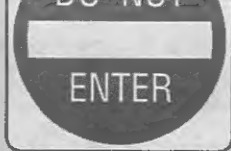
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PHOTO BY DEREK JENSEN

Utah National Guard headquarters.

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Although public water fluoridation won approval of Salt Lake and Davis County voters in last fall's election, both counties postpone enforcement. Davis targets May, 2002 deadline, while Salt Lake resists setting a date.



Finally, a government agency willing to spoof Utah's 2002 Winter Games. The cover of the Utah League of Cities and Towns 2001 local government directory, by local cartoonist Mark Pett, satirizes Gov. Michael Leavitt, IOC chief Antonio Samaranch and SLOC's trademark sensitivity.



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RESCUE

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that road," Bronson said.

The matter was solved quickly, however, after North ran into old friend Lt. Col. Dennis Tolman, who grew up in Midway and is now an intelligence officer at the Guard's State Area Command in Draper. When North asked for the Guard's help,

to raise enough money to install a water line along 250 West before the work commences.

"We're going to try to put that in before the road so it's a better situation," Bronson added.

Once the Guard arrives, Bronson cautioned, people will know it. To get the maximum benefit, the Army intends to use the community project as a military training exercise—complete with full rifle gear and Kevlar helmets.



PHOTO BY KIRSTEN SHAW

Midway's 250 West will get the military treatment in June.

Tolman obliged. The project was moved to the top of the list (avoiding the normal three-year wait), due to the urgency of the Games.

Now the 115th Engineering Group, based in Draper, is preparing to do the work as a "Community Support Project." Midway City, meanwhile, has agreed to spend roughly \$70,000 out of its Class C fund to cover the endeavor, which is estimated to cost a total of \$130,000.

The city will carve up and haul away the old road before the Guard arrives. In addition, Midway is trying

"They'll be treating it as if they're in a combat situation with their M-16s I guess," said Bronson, who is hoping residents don't get "too uptight" about the spectacle.

The councilman pointed out the Guard presence should not pose problems for a valley steeped in military history and accustomed to war-game exercises.

"This isn't like a war game, it's a construction 'game,'" he concluded. "And we're the beneficiaries of it."

Email: derek@wasatchcountycourier.com

SLOC Wants to Use Strawberry Reservoir Water For Artificial Snow

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — If next winter is a tad too warm and there's not enough snow for the cross-country trails during the 2002 Winter Games, Olympics organizers hope to take water from Strawberry Reservoir, turn it into snow and truck it 35 miles to the Soldier Hollow course.

"It's one part of our contingency plan to be 100 percent sure we'll have snow, even if it's one of Utah's worst winters," said Lyle Nelson, SLOC's director of the Soldier Hollow venue 31 miles southeast of Salt Lake City.

At 7,000 feet above sea level, the reservoir is 1,100 feet higher and usually a little colder than Soldier Hollow, where the relatively low elevation can result in weather too warm to make artificial snow, particularly in March when the Paralympics will be held.

"We'll do what we need to do to make it work," Nelson said.

The first thing is to submit a proposal to the Forest Service, which has jurisdiction over use of Strawberry's shoreline.

SLOC is looking at making snow in the Chicken Creek West area along Strawberry's north shore, just off U.S. 40. That area typically is closed during the winter.

"We're waiting to see how they propose to manage the area so it's not a hazard, how they're going to gate it so ice fishermen and others don't go

down there to recreate and get tangled up with their equipment," Julie King, the Forest Service's Heber District ranger, said.

"They'll have to have someone to oversee it and protect their investment. They might have to have an RV or something out there for security," she said.

King also is waiting to see whether SLOC requests to use a snow additive that enhances the freezing of water droplets ejected from snowguns. Its use would require a higher level of environmental analysis because of Strawberry's importance as a drinking water source.

She did not permit use of an additive in a pilot project last month, which was foiled by the weather being too warm at Strawberry. SLOC ended up sending a dozen truckloads of natural snow to Soldier Hollow from the Chicken Creek parking lot.

SLOC also would have to secure water from the reservoir for snow-making.

Richard Tullis, water district operations and maintenance manager of the Central Utah Water Conservancy District, said he has not been contacted yet about SLOC's needs, but, "We would certainly be willing to talk, if approached. We do have some water available in Strawberry. A little bit of water makes a lot of snow."

EDITORIAL

Freedom of Speech vs. Printing for Dollars

Love us or hate us, you can't accuse the *Courier* of being a sell out. In our short history, we have managed to alienate a fair number of our advertisers. The reason is that we have a policy of not allowing our Sales Department to talk to our Editorial Department.

If we feel a story is important, we run it, regardless of which advertiser it may upset. Over the years, we've upset a developer who thought that a series of Letters to the Editor that were critical of developers (including a cowboy poem) where specifically targeted at him. We checked with the letter writers, the letters were about other developers. However a member of our staff (while dining at his restaurant) overheard him say, "Well I guess they know we'll never advertise with them again." Oh well. Haven't seen any ads from him since, but we have seen a whole slug in that other paper. And we still frequently make the drive to eat in his restaurant. It's a great place to eat and we don't hold a grudge.

When the Jordanelle Basin Owners Association ran a full-page color ad with us that, in our opinion, was a little disingenuous, we said so on our editorial page. We haven't seen any ads from them since, but we have seen a whole slug of JBOA advertising in that other paper.

More recently we have had some realtors withhold their advertising to chastise us for our series on cancer in Wasatch County. Again, we see these same realtors advertising heavily in that other paper. Several weeks ago we ran a commentary critical of a local propane dealer.

Amazingly, the next week we got a large contract for advertising from this same propane dealer. Last week we ran a Letter to the Editor again critical of this same propane dealer. Guess who cancelled their ad this week? We'll probably see the ad in that other paper this week.

Look folks, this paper has never been run to promote the agenda of special interests including those of our advertisers. Our commitment is to what we perceive as the best interests of our readers, not our advertisers. However, we have been VERY vocal in asking our readership to shop locally whenever possible. That is because shopping locally is in the best interest of both the business owner and the local residents, a win-win situation. In other papers, advertisers, in conjunction with the local press, have used the press to promote their own agendas/projects. Stories that might upset an advertiser and result in a loss of revenue are summarily buried. We believe the proper role for a newspaper is to report stories that inform the readership, regardless of the consequences from the advertisers. You can tell a lot about a newspaper by who advertises in it, and who doesn't.

